

Submarine scuttling opposed by council

SANTA CRUZ — A resolution opposing the U.S. Navy's program to scuttle at least 100 decommissioned nuclear submarines at sea was unanimously approved by the City Council Tuesday.

Such resolutions general split the council between liberal supporters and conservatives who say the city should keep out of national affairs.

The resolution was brought by Councilman John Laird and Mayor Bruce Van Allen.

Laird said the Navy's plans would reverse a federal ban on ocean disposal that came in 1970, after the government had been using the ocean for nuclear waste for 24 years.

He said although the nuclear core fuel has been removed "each submarine will contain about 50,000 curies of residual radioactivity at the time of disposal."

That figure didn't impress Councilman John Mahaney who wanted to know how 50,000 curies compares to a

glow-in-the-dark wristwatch.

Laird answered, "Substantially more."

The UCSC physics department said this morning the difference is billions of time over. The wristwatch contains only alpha particles that can be absorbed by paper and are expected to be absorbed within the watch.

Mahaney said, "Well, I really don't want any nuclear material in the ocean" and went along with a yes vote.

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